

Breastfeeding In the 1st Week

A Counseling Guide for Health Care Professionals

Counseling Message for Mothers	Background for Professionals
Breastfeed as soon as possible after birth.	Newborns are alert for the first couple hours after birth. Encourage mothers to breastfeed as soon as possible.
Offer the breast at least 8-12 times every 24 hours.	Newborns need to nurse often because their stomachs are small. Frequent feeding also helps prevent hypoglycemia, minimize jaundice, and stimulate milk supply. By day 3, babies are more alert and have longer periods of wakefulness. Babies usually nurse every 1 ½ to 3 hours for a total of at least 8-12 feedings every 24 hours. If baby breastfeeds less than 8 times/day, evaluate the feeding pattern to make sure baby is feeding often enough.* Assess evidence of milk transfer through frequent audible swallowing, softening of the breasts, and elimination patterns. See the other side for more information.
Hold your baby close to breastfeed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn baby's whole body toward you. • Bring baby's chest close to your chest and baby's nose and chin close to your breast. • Hold baby so that baby's mouth is level with your nipples (a pillow or folded blanket might help). • Touch baby's lips with your nipple so baby will open mouth. • Bring baby close to latch on when baby's mouth is wide open. 	Both mother and baby should be comfortable during feedings. Encourage mothers to support their breasts during feeding. Hold the breast with the thumb above and four fingers below the breast and behind the areola. Breastfeeding should not hurt. However, some mothers experience discomfort or tenderness in the early days. This gradually subsides. Pain that causes a woman to question whether to continue breastfeeding is <u>not</u> normal.* Assess positioning and other maternal and infant factors to determine the cause of the pain.
Avoid pacifiers and bottles, especially for the first three weeks.	Breast milk is all that healthy babies need. It takes some practice for breastfeeding to go smoothly. Encourage mothers to wait until milk supply is established before introducing bottles or pacifiers. Babies suck differently on bottle nipples and pacifiers and may become confused at the breast.

***Consider consultation or referral to a board certified lactation consultant (IBCLC).**



Breastfeeding In the 1st Week – continued

Counseling Message for Mothers	Background for Professionals																		
<p>Look for signs that baby is getting enough:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen for swallowing.• Count the number of wet and dirty diapers.	<p>Teach mothers to evaluate how baby is feeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When milk begins to flow, mother should be able to hear the soft “ka, ka” sound as baby swallows.• Wet and dirty diapers are an excellent indicator of how much breast milk baby is getting. The stool changes in color and consistency as mature milk replaces colostrum. Once the meconium is eliminated, stools will be loose and unformed, with a consistency of seedy mustard. The minimum number of wet and dirty diapers per day for the first week is listed in the chart below. <table><tr><th>Day</th><th>Wets*</th><th>Stools*</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1-2</td><td>1-2 dark</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2-3</td><td>2-3 dark to greenish-brown</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3-4</td><td>3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>3-4</td><td>3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish</td></tr><tr><td>5-7</td><td>6+</td><td>3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish</td></tr></table> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• After 4 weeks of age, stooling patterns change. The volume of stool usually increases and the frequency decreases. However, each baby is different.	Day	Wets*	Stools*	1	1-2	1-2 dark	2	2-3	2-3 dark to greenish-brown	3	3-4	3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish	4	3-4	3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish	5-7	6+	3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish
Day	Wets*	Stools*																	
1	1-2	1-2 dark																	
2	2-3	2-3 dark to greenish-brown																	
3	3-4	3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish																	
4	3-4	3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish																	
5-7	6+	3-4 greenish-brown to yellowish																	
<p>Have baby’s weight checked within the first week by one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baby’s health care provider• Certified lactation consultant• The hospital nursery• A visiting nurse• A well child clinic• A WIC clinic	<p>Babies lose weight the first 4 days after birth. Then most breastfed babies begin gaining weight at the rate of ½ to 1 oz./day.* Babies discharged with a weight loss ≥ 7% should be seen by their health care provider within 2 days of discharge. An early weight check gives a new mother confidence in her ability to produce enough milk and an opportunity for you to answer questions and provide support.</p> <p>Note: By 2 weeks of age, babies should be at or over birth weight.</p>																		
<p>Questions? Call one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certified breastfeeding educators• Certified lactation consultants• Health care professionals• La Leche League• Peer support groups• WIC staff	<p>Mothers and babies are not born knowing how to breastfeed. It takes patience and practice to learn and recognize each other’s signals. Identify sources of support from family members, friends, and the community. Encourage mothers to call with questions or for advice.</p>																		

***Consider consultation or referral to a board certified lactation consultant (IBCLC).**



Distributed by the Bureau of Nutrition, Iowa Department of Public Health
May 1998